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## Export Certification Manual

# Introduction

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## Purpose

The *Export Certification Manual* (ECM) is a reference to be used when inspecting and certifying plants and plant products offered for export and when issuing Federal plant export certificates.

Phytosanitary Issues Management, Export Services is the Headquarters unit within the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine (USDA-APHIS-PPQ), that maintains a phytosanitary export certification program for U.S. exporters of U.S. and foreign origin agricultural commodities.

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## Scope

The ECM provides the procedures for certifying plants and plant products offered for export. Also, the ECM covers the information about PPQ's Export Certification Project, EXCERPT, an electronic database that provides current information on the plant import requirements of foreign countries.

This manual is divided into the following chapters:

- ◆ *Introduction*
- ◆ *Procedures*
- ◆ *Special Procedures*

The manual also includes *Appendixes*, a *Glossary*, and an *Index*.

The *Introduction* provides basic information about the ECM. This chapter includes the manual's purpose, scope, users, and application; a list of related documents that provides the authority for the manual's content; directions about how to use the manual; and the conventions (unfamiliar or unique symbols and highlighting) that appear throughout the manual).

The *Procedures* provide the prerequisites and the general guidelines for certifying plants and plant products offered for export. The prerequisites include basic policy, EXCERPT, types of products, roles and responsibilities, contact protocol, and an overview of the general guidelines. The general guidelines include deciding to certify, identifying import requirements, inspecting the plants or plant products, and preparing export certificates.

The *Special Procedures* provide unique guidelines covering aspects of export certification that warrant special handling, such as certification programs, compliance agreements, accreditation programs, and other procedures that supplement the general guidelines.

The *Appendixes* contain supplementary information which are **not** considered procedural, or are explanations and elaborations **not** essential to the manual but helpful to the user, or information that interrupts the main flow of the procedures making them more difficult to follow.

The *Glossary* defines specialized words, abbreviations, and acronyms associated with certifying plants and plant products for export.

The *Index* contains topics with links and page numbers for quick reference.

Although the ECM does mention and give some direction for using EXCERPT as related to the procedures, the ECM **does not** comprehensively cover the use of databases related to export certification. Related databases include EXCERPT, ACO (Authorized Certification Official) database, and the future PCIT (Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance Tracking System).

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## Users

Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) use the ECM to assist in inspecting and certifying plants and plant products and issuing Federal plant export certificates. Export certification specialists, local PPQ contact points, trade specialists, and supervisors (State plant health directors, regional program managers, officers-in-charge, and State plant regulatory officials) also use the ECM. Other interested parties reference the ECM.

The experience of users will vary, but ACOs have a working knowledge of the following:

- ◆ APHIS regulatory philosophy
- ◆ EXCERPT
- ◆ *Treatment Manual*
- ◆ Usage of PPQ operational manuals to make regulatory decisions

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## Related Documents

Enabling legislation provides the authority to carry out the mission of protecting American agriculture from plant pests. Legislative Acts are the fundamental authority granted by Congress to the Secretary of Agriculture to promulgate regulations to protect American agriculture. The regulatory authority for taking the actions listed in this manual is contained in the following legislative acts, multinational treaty, and regulations:

- ◆ [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna](#)
- ◆ [Endangered Species Act](#)
- ◆ [Plant Protection Act](#)
- ◆ [Code of Federal Regulations](#)

## Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) is a multinational treaty that regulates the export and re-export of listed species of wild fauna and flora. CITES provides three appendixes for listing plants and plant products. These appendixes, listed in order of their restrictiveness, are as follows:

1. CITES Appendix I—any genus, species, subspecies, or variety, globally threatened with extinction through trade.
2. CITES Appendix II—any taxon (the entire family—all genera and all species) that **must** be regulated in order to avoid the threat of extinction through trade.
3. CITES Appendix III—any species, subspecies, or variety listed by one country in order to enlist the cooperation of other countries to reinforce domestic conservation measures by regulating trade.

Trade in protected species of CITES plants and plant products is monitored. More specifically, commercial trade in CITES Appendix I plants and plant products taken from the wild is **prohibited**, and commercial trade in CITES Appendix II plants and plant products is allowed **only** if that trade is **not** detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild.

The export of CITES plants and plant products requires a permit or certificate issued by the Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS), Division of Management Authority (DMA)<sup>1</sup>, which exporters **must** apply for to export protected plants and plant products. USDA-APHIS-PPQ **does not** issue CITES export documents.

However, for all commercial exports and re-exports of protected plants and plant products, USDA-APHIS-PPQ does require exporters to hold a PPQ Form 622, USDA General Permit<sup>2</sup>, which is issued by PPQ.

## Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) provides for the protection of listed species in two categories. These categories, listed in order of their restrictiveness, are as follows:

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1 For questions about CITES export documents, exporters can contact DMA at toll free phone 800-358-2104 or write U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Management Authority, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, VA 22203.

2 For questions about USDA General Permits, exporters can contact USDA-APHIS-PPQ Permit Services at toll free phone 877-770-5990, or FAX at 301-734-8700, or go to web site address: <<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/permits>>.

1. Endangered—any species, subspecies, or variety that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
2. Threatened—any species, subspecies, or variety that is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

In general, ESA **prohibits** the trade in endangered and threatened species. The export of **endangered** species of plants and plant products is allowed for scientific research, enhancement of propagation, and enhancement of survival. The Department of the Interior issues export permits for endangered species under exceptional conditions.

The export of **threatened** species may be allowed for scientific research, enhancement of propagation, enhancement of survival, educational exhibition, display at botanical gardens and arboretums, and other activities consistent with the purposes and policy of ESA.

In all instances, the export of plants and plant products protected by ESA requires a permit issued by the Department of the Interior through the Division of Management Authority (DMA). USDA-APHIS-PPQ **does not** issue DMA permit.

### Plant Protection Act

Foreign countries have established plant quarantine regulations which exporters of U.S. agricultural products are required to meet. Section 418 of the Plant Protection Act (PPA) provides the authority for issuing Federal plant export certificates for the export of plants and plant products, and enables PPQ to help exporters meet the plant quarantine import requirements of foreign countries.

The regulations for enforcing the PPA are contained in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

### Code of Federal Regulations

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) provide the authority for the regulatory action taken and are enforced by USDA-APHIS-PPQ. The restrictions and prohibitions listed in this manual are covered by the following Title 7 and Title 50 parts:

- ◆ [7CFR Part 353](#)
- ◆ [7CFR Part 354.3](#)
- ◆ [7CFR Part 355](#)
- ◆ [7CFR Part 356](#)
- ◆ [50CFR Part 17.12](#)

◆ [50CFR Part 23.23](#)

◆ [50CFR Part 24.12](#)

**7CFR Part 353**

7CFR Part 353—Export Certification provides the following:

- ◆ Identifies the purpose and administration of the phytosanitary export certification program as a service to U.S. exporters
- ◆ Lists PPQ regional offices where information can be obtained for issuing Federal plant export certificates for plants and plant products
- ◆ Lists designated ports where Federal plant export certificates may be issued for terrestrial plants listed in 50CFR Part 17 or 23
- ◆ Identifies the responsibilities of exporters
- ◆ Describes the application for certification as well as the Federal plant export certificates
- ◆ Identifies the responsibilities of Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) to sign and issue a Federal plant export certificate based on the findings of an inspection
- ◆ Describes accreditation of nongovernment facilities and the standards for accreditation of nongovernment facilities to perform laboratory seed health testing and seed crop phytosanitary inspection
- ◆ Contains a provision to ensure that ACOs **do not** inspect and certify shipments of plants or plant products in which they or members of their family have a direct or indirect financial interest
- ◆ Provides for issuing Federal plant export certificates and entering into cooperative programs

**7CFR Part  
354.3**

7CFR Part 354.3 provides the authority to collect user fees and overtime costs for Federal plant export certificates.

**7CFR Part 355**

7CFR Part 355 provides the authority and procedures to administer and require USDA General Permits to import, export, or re-export endangered or threatened terrestrial plants listed in 50CFR Part 17 or 50CFR 23.

**7CFR Part 356**

7CFR Part 356 provides the authority and procedures for the forfeiture of any plant, equipment, means of conveyance, or other property seized under ESA or the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981.

**50CFR Part  
17.12**

50CFR Part 17.12 provides a list of all plant species that have been determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, to be endangered or threatened.

## 50CFR Part 23.23

50CFR Part 23.23 Subpart—Endangered Species Convention provides a list of all plant and animal species that have been placed in CITES Appendix I, CITES Appendix II, or CITES Appendix III.

## 50CFR Part 24.12

50CFR Part 24.12 Subpart—Designated ports provides a list of U.S. Department of Agriculture ports that are designated to import, export, or re-export plants listed in 50CFR Part 17.12 or 50CFR 23.23.

## Application

The ECM contains national-level policies and guidelines for the tasks associated with export certification.

## How to Report Problems With the ECM

Use [Table 1-1-1](#) to report export certification problems, situations, and disagreements or to offer suggestions which directly affect the contents of the ECM.

**TABLE 1-1-1: How to Report Problems With the ECM**

If you:	Then:
Are unable to access the online manual	CONTACT PPQ's Manuals Unit. If the situation warrants immediate action, call 240-629-1934 or e-mail <a href="mailto:john.l.patterson@aphis.usda.gov">john.l.patterson@aphis.usda.gov</a> . Otherwise, print, complete, and mail a <i>Comment Sheet</i> (located at the end of the manual) to PPQ's Manuals Unit.
Have a suggestion for improving the formatting (design, layout, composition), grammar, or spelling	
Need help with an export issue, policy, or procedure	If the situation warrants an immediate response, then CONTACT someone for assistance (see <a href="#">Table 2-1-3 on page 2-1-20</a> for the established contact protocol); otherwise, print, complete, and mail a <i>Comment Sheet</i> (located at the end of the manual) to PPQ's Manuals Unit
Disagree with policy or procedures	If the situation warrants an immediate response, then CONTACT someone for assistance (see <a href="#">Table 2-1-3 on page 2-1-20</a> for the established protocol); provide the reason for the disagreement and a recommendation. Otherwise, print, complete, and mail a <i>Comment Sheet</i> (located at the end of the manual) to PPQ's Manuals Unit providing the reason for the disagreement and a recommendation

## Conventions

Conventions are established by custom and are widely recognized and accepted. Major conventions used in the ECM follow.

### Advisories

Advisories are used throughout the ECM to bring important information to the user's attention. Please carefully review each advisory. The definitions coincide with American National Standards Institute and are in the format shown below.



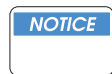
DANGEROUS indicates that people could easily be hurt or killed.



WARNING indicates that people could possibly be hurt or killed.



CAUTION indicates that people could possibly be endangered and slightly hurt.



NOTICE indicates a possibly dangerous situation where goods might be damaged.



IMPORTANT indicates helpful information.

### Boldfacing

Boldfaced type is used to emphasize important words throughout the ECM. These words include: **always, cannot, do not, does not, except, must, never, no, not, only, other than.**

### Bullets

Bulleted lists indicate that there is **no** order to the information listed.

### Chapters

This manual contains the following chapters: *Introduction, Procedures, and Special Procedures.*



## Contents

Most every chapter and section of a chapter has a table of contents that lists the heading titles, and is located at the beginning to help facilitate finding information.

## Control Data

Information placed at the top and bottom of each page helps users keep track of where they are in the manual and of manual updates. At the top of the page is the chapter, section, and first-level heading. At the bottom of the page is the month, year, manual transmittal number, title, page number, and PPQ work unit responsible for content.

## Decision Tables

Decision tables are used throughout the ECM. Read decision tables from left to right, beginning with the column headings and moving left one column at a time. Each column represents a condition with the last column on the right representing the action to take once all the conditions are considered. Using [Table 1-1-2](#); if you are a 28 year old female, then you would schedule a physical.

**TABLE 1-1-2: How to Use Decision Tables**

If you are a:	And your age is:	Then:
Male	Under 30	<b>Do not</b> schedule a physical
	30 or over	Schedule a physical
Female	Under 25	<b>Do not</b> schedule a physical
	25 or over	Schedule a physical

## Examples

Examples are used to clarify a point by applying to a real-world situation. Examples **always** appear in boxes as a means of visually separating them from the other information contained on the page.

### EXAMPLE

Examples are graphically placed boxes within the text as a means of visually separating information from other information contained on the page. Examples will **always** appear in a box.

## Footnotes

Footnotes are usually placed at the bottom of a page that comment on or cite a reference from a designated part of the text. The following types of footnotes are used in the ECM.

- ◆ General text footnotes that are located at the bottom of the page, which are consecutively numbered throughout the manual
- ◆ Table or figure footnotes that are located directly below the associated table or figure (if a table or figure continues beyond one page, then the associated footnotes will appear on the last page).

### Heading Levels

Within each chapter and section there are three heading levels. The first heading is indicated by a horizontal line followed by the title which continues across both the left and right columns. The second heading is in the right-hand column with the text beginning below. The third heading is in the left-hand column and is used to easily scan topics.

### Hypertext Links (Highlighting) to Tables, Figures, and Headings

Tables and figures are highlighted in bold print. Hypertext links within the online manual are also highlighted in blue print. Headings are highlighted in italic print.

#### EXAMPLE

See [Table 1-1-1](#) in the *Introduction* to determine how to report problems with the ECM.

### Indentions

Entry requirements which are summarized from CFRs, import permits, or policies are indented on the page.

### Italicized Brackets

When completing or reviewing certain certificates or forms, information that is to be entered, listed, or filled in is italicized and enclosed in brackets.

### Numbered Lists

Numbered listed are used to indicate the specific order in which the information listed is to be followed.

### Numbering Scheme

A three-level numbering scheme is used in this manual for pages, tables, and figures. The first number represents the chapter. The second number represents the section. The third number represents the page, table, or figure. This numbering scheme allows for easier updating and adding pages without having to reprint an entire chapter. Dashes are used in page numbering to differentiate page numbers from decimal points.

## **Section**

Some of the chapters in this manual are broken down into sections. Each section begins on a new, right-hand page. Sections are identified by the second number in the numbering scheme used for this manual. The manual chapters *Procedures* and *Special Procedures* are divided into sections.

